



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
CONNECTICUT STATE LIBRARY



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Testimony of
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Concerning House Bill No. 5031
AN ACT REDUCING COSTS TO MUNICIPALITIES
March 10, 2010

The State Library would like to draw the Committee's attention to Sec. 35 of the proposed bill. That section calls for reducing by 5 years the retention of municipal records "for which the retention period is currently twenty years." There is only one municipal record that specifically has a 20 year retention and that one relates to library construction grants. This section also calls for giving the Real Property Electronic Recording Advisory Committee responsibility for reviewing retention schedules. This committee was specifically established to advise the State Library on developing regulations for implementing electronic land recording in Connecticut. The committee's expertise is in the area of land recording not the wide range of municipal records our municipal retention schedules cover.

Pursuant to CGS § 11-8 and § 11-8a, the Office of the Public Records under the direction of the State Library Board is responsible for designing and implementing the Public Records Program for local government agencies and for state agencies within the executive department of government.

The State Librarian, through the Office of the Public Records Administrator, oversees the life cycle of public records; develops standards for record creation, including permanent papers and records stored in electronic format; publishes records retention schedules and provides records management guidelines. It publishes manuals, general letters, guidelines and standards to keep state and local government agencies informed about current records management issues and requirements. By statute, the Public Records Administrator and State Archivist must approve the disposition of all public records.

Records retention schedules reflect federal and state law, generally accepted accounting practices, court decisions, and best practices. The Public Records Administrator routinely reviews retention schedules and convenes expert committees to assist in these reviews. There are cases where retention periods exceed 20 years, such as personnel files where the retention period is 30 years after employment, or 25 years for litigation files, or 50 years for some student records, or bridge maintenance records which are for the life of the structure, or building files which are for the life of the building. There are also many records which are deemed to be permanent. Again these are not arbitrary decisions and in an open records state such as Connecticut, the reasonable retention of records is essential to the public's right to know.

I am very willing to work with the Committee on Planning and Development to draft language to address retention issues.